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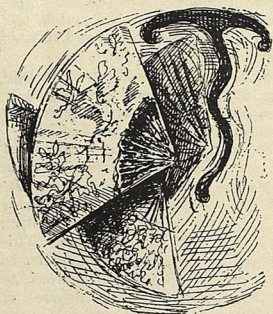
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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

TAPESTRY PAINTING.

By EMMA HAYWOOD.



THE ever increasing demand for instruction in tapestry painting leads me to think that some further remarks on the subject may be acceptable. Some of my readers may remember, that in previous numbers of this magazine I gave some technical hints on the French method. This method has been greatly improved on since its first introduction some few years ago. Its great superiority over any other, lies in the fact that the dyes used become

practically indelible by means of subjecting them to the action of steam after the painting is finished; always provided that the work has been executed on wool canvas. This canvas was invented quite recently by a Frenchman to closely resemble the Gobelins stitch, and is called Binant canvas after his name. It is of a very heavy make, and represents either a fine or coarse stitch, and must be chosen according to the requirements of the subject in hand. The coarse make really strikes the eye as being more like the woven tapestries, but when the work is small in detail, it is almost impossible to use it with advantage. The Binant canvas is precisely the same in make on both sides, the only difference being that the side on which the threads are fastened off is necessarily not quite so smooth as the other, and should, therefore, be made the wrong side. This particular canvas, when brought forward by Binant, was at once adopted in the Paris Ateliers to the exclusion of any other kind; that previously used was of a much harsher nature, and therefore not nearly so well adapted for hangings. The price of this canvas per yard is six dollars and upward, according to the width. The quality does not vary; the narrowest width is 54 inches; the widest is 122. The fine ribbed make is 54 inches wide; the coarse rib runs wider. The great demand for this kind of canvas naturally caused competition, and soon a quantity of material closely resembling it to the inexperienced eye was thrown upon the market. Most of this spurious make comes from Belgium, and answers the purpose fairly well, but when once an artist has been accustomed to the touch of the genuine Binant canvas, if his eye does not detect the difference, his hand assuredly will as soon as he commences to paint.

Much the same may be said of the colors, which vary to a degree that makes it hazardous to attempt to properly steam them unless very sure that they are made with a view to being fixed in this way. I may mention that since writing my previous articles on this subject, the colors I speak of, are obtainable at the store of M. T. Wynne, 65 East Thirteenth Street, New York; also a special medium prepared to use with them. These colors are known as Grénié's dyes, and are so marked on the labels. They are much stronger than those ordinarily sold; indeed, they are so powerful that great care must be exercised in using them after being accustomed to the making of any others. The price is twenty-five cents each bottle, the medium twenty-five and fifty cents the bottle. This special medium is prepared in a liquid state ready for use, and must not be mixed with other than the Grénié dyes, as it changes their color in some cases; for instance, it turns vermillion into a muddy gray. Furthermore, the indestructible medium made to go with the aniline dyes, hitherto mostly in use, does partially fix them, whereas it would be worse than useless to mix Grénié's medium with these aniline dyes, as it is not calculated to fix them at all, being specially made to act on the pigments employed in the manufacture of these particular dyes.

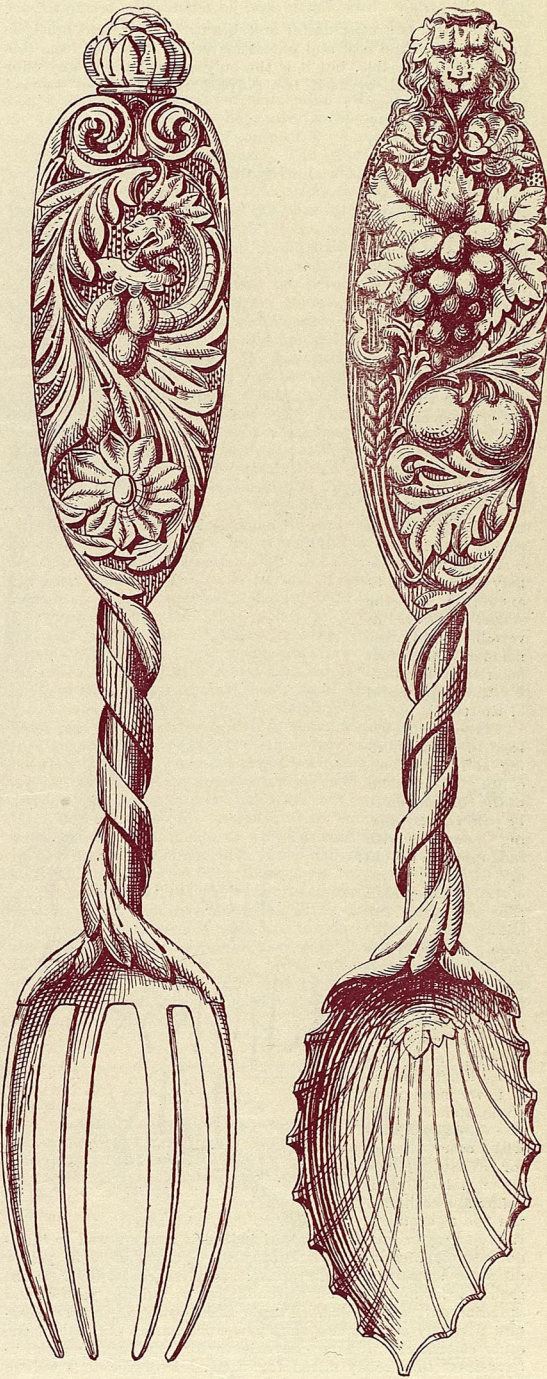
Another great advantage appertaining to the use of Grénié's dyes lies in the fact that they consist only of ten colors instead of about thirty-six, half of which are practically worthless and very confusing to the purchaser, who probably buys a good many that are not necessary to him, and leaves out some that are indispensable.

The list of Grénié's colors is as follows, and all are required to make the set complete: Yellow, sanguine, indigo, ultramarine, cochineal, ponceau, rose, green, brown and purple. As the two last are really a combination of some of the others, in professional hands they are not needed, but I would recommend the amateur to include them, as it will save him much trouble to have these colors ready mixed. A brief description of the qualities of the above dyes may be acceptable to my readers.

It will be observed that there is but one yellow. It resembles, more than any other, the color known as Indian yellow, and

is beautifully clear. By diluting it with medium and water, the most exquisite pale lemon shade can be obtained. By adding a little sanguine, you produce a tan color, very bright, which can be modified with a touch of indigo. If you add ponceau to the yellow, a brilliant orange is the result; in fact, this one yellow is all sufficient for the infinite variety of tints in which this primary color is a factor.

Next on the list we have sanguine. This is used always as the foundation of flesh painting, hence its name, for although on



DESIGN FOR SALAD FORK AND SPOON, BY F. BOYE, SAN FRANCISCO.*

* This design was awarded the third prize in the DECORATOR AND FURNISHER competition.

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the palette it looks just like ordinary burnt sienna, when slightly diluted and scrubbed into the canvas it assumes a very sanguinary tint, startlingly bright until counteracted by the use of green made from mixing yellow with Indigo, as elsewhere described, in the best method given for flesh painting.

Indigo is too well known to need description, but I may mention that it is much more useful than ultramarine, in a general way. Ultramarine is, however, of great service when combined with other colors in obtaining artistic shades for draperies. It is much too crude and bright to use by itself, except, perhaps, to intensify a deep blue sky, but in such a case it requires a great deal of diluting.

Cochineal is a most useful and beautiful color, and must be prepared from the best and purest material. The odor from this liquid is disagreeable, but it is the only color that has any odor at all. Cochineal, by itself, is a purplish red, but when steamed becomes a rich crimson. It is constantly used in combination with other colors, and forms a component part of all shades of gray, the other tints used being indigo and yellow, with just a little sanguine. It is also invaluable in modifying the crudity of green, whether derived from a mixture of indigo and yellow, or the prepared green and yellow. Cochineal can likewise be added with advantage to almost every shade of red and violet, as it will greatly enrich them.

Ponceau and rose may be described as answering to the shades known as vermillion and rose madder. The first mentioned is possibly the more useful of the two.

These tints are used in flesh painting and varied according to the color of the complexion to be painted. By mixing ponceau with sanguine you obtain an exquisite terracotta shade which can be varied by adding yellow or indigo. Ponceau is the foundation of all brilliant reds, but is too intense and crude to use by itself in its full strength. Green sometimes called Emerald green is never under any circumstances of service unless combined with other shades, for distant foliage when mixed with yellow and cochineal the most exquisite tints of grey-green are obtained indeed it answers well to introduce it for almost any kind of green, a touch of it in yellow produces a beautiful apple green; its presence however is not required in a strong olive shade when indigo, yellow and sanguine only are needed. Purple and brown are not an absolute necessity as they are simply a combination of some of the other colors, still it is a convenience for the inexperienced to have these tints ready mixed for them. However it is well to know how to mix them in case of need. Indigo and sanguine make a good brown, by adding cochineal it can be very much enriched, by adding yellow, more of a tan color is the result, for a cold blackish tone, add both cochineal and yellow,

indeed any variety of brown can be obtained with the above named four colors.

Purple can be made in various ways according to the tone desired. Rose and ultramarine make a very bright shade, properly diluted, with rose preponderating mauve or lilac is the result. Cochineal, indigo and rose produce a rich purple, a little ponceau added is sometimes an improvement. To match any particular shade you must ring the changes on blues and reds till you get exactly the tint you want.

One great advantage gained in using Grönies dyes is that they are prepared to properly amalgamate and do not, so to speak, eat each other up, as is so often the case with the aniline dyes, this tendency is very mortifying to say the least of it.

Another advantage is that the medium with which they must invariably be mixed, has amongst other ingredients a certain amount of gum in it which holds the color provisionally on the

surface of the canvas while the painting is going on. This enables the artist to model the work to a high degree of finish for by the dexterous use of a penknife, the blade of which should be rounded, he can recover high lights, soften hard edges, blend tones and better still, eradicate mistakes without the least fear of injuring the texture of the canvas. Indeed so useful is the knife in tapestry painting after this method that I have heard it remarked by an artist of considerable experience that the knife was his best brush.

This does not apply to painting on linen which absorbs the color in such a way that the knife is of little or no practical use, nor is there any method but the one I am treating of, where the knife takes effect whatever.

The action of steam properly applied, drives the gum out of the canvas and fixes the dyes at the same time. A few words on the process of steaming tapestries may be at the same time interesting and instructive for there is no reason why anyone who wishes to, should not, with a very small outlay steam his own paintings in which case he will ensure their being thoroughly well done and this is most important.

For ordinary sized work a hollow zinc or tin cylinder about seven feet high and one foot in diameter is sufficiently large. This must be divided into two parts, the lower part which forms the boiler, being about one foot in depth. Fill the boiler half full of water and place it over a gas stove of sufficient power to keep the water boiling very fast. Now slip the hollow cylinder into position, the joint should fit closely, a thin cloth between will help to prevent any steam escaping.

Two bars of notched wood made in the form of a cross are required on which to fasten the Tapestries to be steamed. Take the paintings carefully off the stretchers on which you have been working and roll them up loosely after sewing them lightly



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together, be sure you do not crease them in so doing, as while the gum is in them, such marks are liable to show. Now attach them firmly with string to the notches on the crossbars taking care to leave room between each circle of canvas for the steam to pass through. Secure the end at the bottom so that it cannot flap against the sides. Now drop the roll of canvas so secured right into the cylinder and let the crossbars rest on the top of it. See that the canvas hangs straight for on no account must it touch the sides anywhere for fear of its coming in contact with any condensed steam, this is what must be specially guarded against as drops of moisture will cause the colors to run if they fall on the painting while it is enveloped in steam. To prevent the steam condensing within the cylinder at the top, cover the aperture with an old woollen shawl folded two or three times and secure it with string. The steam will filter through this without condensing on the inside.

If the water boils fast and the steam rises freely, about one hour will be long enough from the time the steam first appears.

When the time is up not a moment must be lost between uncovering the cylinder and whipping out the canvas, protect the hands or they will get scalded, catch hold of the crossbar firmly, snatch it right out and all is finished. Unroll the canvas and you will be surprised and delighted, if all has gone well, at the beautiful enrichment and softening of the coloring produced by the steam bath, and at the same time you have the satisfaction of knowing that your work is absolutely and indelibly fixed.

I have been led to explain thus fully this particular method because I am so often applied to respecting the qualities of the different makes of dyes. I have always used the colors referred to here, since I recognized their superiority at a fine exhibition of Tapestries held in London a few years back, but knowing that until quite recently they were not retailed in this country I considered it useless to enter into exhaustive details concerning them. Now, however, for earnest and highly finished durable work, I can confidently recommend them in preference to any others and trust that the above remarks will render it sufficiently easy to manipulate them in a manner calculated to give them a fair trial.

ANOTHER RELIEF.

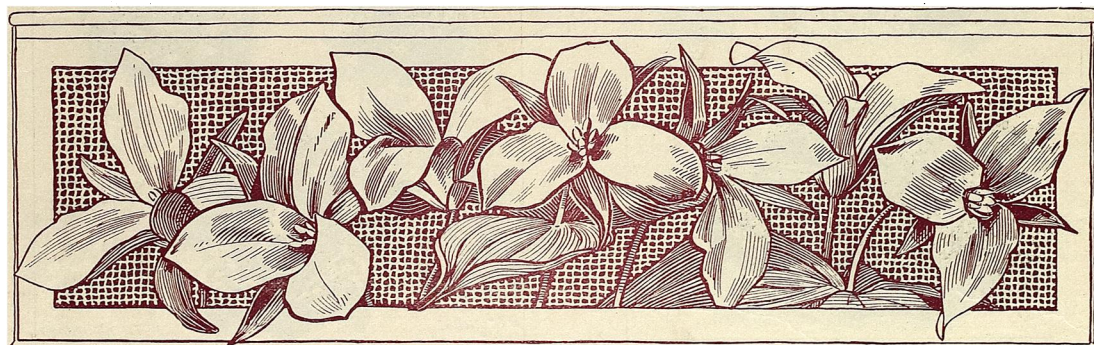
VARIED considerations have operated to multiply the forms of solid relief decoration already substituted, to a large extent, for the comparatively early papier mache and the more ancient stucco. The same questions naturally arise with each new product from this rapid evolution. No one wishes to accept a novelty of this class without knowing whether it will stay on wall and ceiling, and whether the color will be permanent or will gradually disappear. An inquiry of consequence in addition is naturally in regard to cost. On varied requirements hang the laws by which inventors must be governed in this as in all material productions. While a union of beauty with stability is indispensable in meeting public demand, the exaction must be satisfied with no generally high degree of cost.

A recent effort in this direction is represented in the yet few examples of Petra Crusta relief work, which are either complete or in process of execution. This plastic compound is a substitute for plaster while designed for a multitude of uses in decorative arts. With qualities proving of the value represented in its introduction this newly discovered material will be of extended usefulness for interior decoration. Its comparative inexpensiveness is largely in its favor in securing for it a fair trial. It is adapted for any architectural and decorative designs in either high or light relief or in intaglio. The designs are either modeled directly on the wall or moulded and cast to be applied in the ordinary manner with such forms. The material is fire-proof as well as water-proof, and will be used in the making of fire protective screens in theatres and elsewhere. It is hard as rock when set, which is accomplished in about forty-eight hours, when it is ready for

the finish in gilding and coloring. It is highly elastic in a moist state, admitting easily of any treatment of decorative form. Not only stone and marble, but all kinds of wood and leather are imitated in it, and boxes for jewelers and druggists include a variety in imitation of ivory. It is found in many other classes of articles, such as satchels and pocketbooks, fancy cases, umbrella and parasol handles, screens, bric-a-brac, and pictures in relief, painted with effects of bronze or in any manner desired. A prolific line of the production at present is in campaign heads, while the smile of Mrs. Cleveland, caught in Petra Crusta, brightens through silver bronze. The same material provides picture frames as well as tiles, marble slabs and mosaic veneers and scroll work for furniture. It admits of high polish while taking any color. At a fourth of the cost of marble it appears a fair substitute for that natural product, in dados and paneling, and in slabs of varied use.

A curious and interesting experiment which proved, nevertheless, a failure was made in connection with this manufacture. As ox blood is known to be quite tenacious, this was tried in substitution for glue in the compound. A considerable economy of production was anticipated. The result was that the color would come through in a disagreeable dark tone—a survival of the unfittest—of which the elimination by any means has been thus far impossible. Such is the permeating quality of this coloring matter, that if a piece of the material infused with it—even though this may be solidified like a petrification—is placed in contact with some of the yet plastic product, which has about the color of putty; the latter will be directly colored throughout from the stone-like mass. From these conditions the abattoirs supply no material for this manufacture.

With the brief period of the use of Petra Crusta, it is not yet seen largely in decoration. The most recent work of consequence with which it is introduced is in the nearly completed club-house opposite the Grand Opera House, in Twenty-third street. In this case, the relief is modeled entirely on the plastered surface. The designs are drawn by an Italian designer, and the modeling is done by an American, with corrections, if need be, from the hand of the former. The combination of Italian fancy with American stability of workmanship is thought a good one. The ceiling is decorated with two large designs in circles, alternating with three ornamental arrangements connected with the gas-jets. In one of the circles birds are represented in flight against a sky treated with such perspective effect as to send it up some feet in apparent height. The outer portion of the circle is filled with foliage of aquatic species, including bullrushes and waterlilies. The whole is in soft Italian colors, with intermingling of gold leaf and gold bronze. A heavy molding forms the outline, and outside of this four Druid heads are shown in the four cardinal directions, encircled with renaissance scroll-work. The additional circle with sky background contains a figure of the youthful Gambrinus, surrounded with forms of foliage and with glass in hand ready to toast the health of those who enter. The gas-fixture medallion centre is a grotesque face with the gas-pipe held between the teeth. Around this are circling rays in relief, making the whole like the represented old-man face of the sun, with astronomical forms in crescents, stars and comets grouped about. Four corner circles are designed with emblematic heads. An outer band, twelve inches in width around the ceiling, is formed in two heavy moldings, with inner moldings in gold, and with enlivening olive leaves filling the panels between. The side wall on the north side next the street is adorned with two large figures in relief, semi-recumbent on either side of an arch. The decorations on the south walls are in panels corresponding with the general design. A preliminary part of the modeling is done on the scaffold, so that a head, when put up, is a rounded piece of the plastic material. The next process is with the modeling stick on the wall, after which the final perfecting treatment is added by the designer.



Decorated Panel Trilliums.

Thompson Willing.